

NEWS RELEASE

National Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, June 21: David E. Finley, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that two canvases by Fragonard entitled Love as Conqueror and Love as Folly had been given to the Gallery by Miss Jean W. Simpson, in memory of her mother, Mrs. John W. Simpson. Mrs. Simpson, during her lifetime, contributed a number of works of art to the collection of the National Gallery of Art. Among these are very distinguished paintings by Chardin and Raeburn, as well as numerous and, in part, unique examples of sculpture by Rodin.

Mr. Finley said: "The addition of the two Fragonards now brings to five the number of paintings by that artist in the National Gallery of Art. The section of eighteenth-century French painting, so magnificently enriched two years ago by the Kress donation, is continuing to grow in importance. Though inadequately represented at the time of the opening, the paintings of this school at the National Gallery now form one of the most distinguished representations of the period in the world."

"The little oval canvases, given by Miss Simpson, which have been preserved in their original frames, are particularly brilliant (perhaps also the earliest) versions of Fragonard's two most popular compositions"; John Walker, Chief Curator of the Gallery stated. "The paintings were engraved in reverse by Janinet in the 1770's", Mr. Walker continued. "They thus belong to that happy period in Fragonard's career when he painted the decorative canvases for Baron Saint-Julien which Miss Simpson's paintings will join at the National Gallery. This was also the time when Fragonard painted the decorations for Madame du Barry which, along with panels of a later period in the artist's life, adorned the entrancing room of the Maubert house at Grasse, and are now one of the great treasures of the Frick Collection in New York. When, about 1790, Fragonard transferred the panels originally painted for Madame du Barry to Grasse, he reverted, in the additional pictures done for the room, to his earlier style and selected the compositions of the Simpson canvases for two of the new over door panels, painting the scenes this time in the same direction as the engravings."

The new gifts from Miss Simpson will be placed immediately on exhibition in Gallery 54.